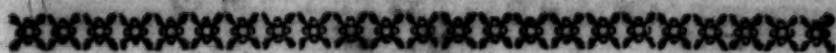


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TWO
SERMONS

BY

WILLIAM

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE.



SERMONS



WILLIAM

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

ADDRESSED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE.

*See
Inventory*

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TH

A
S E R M O N
ON THE
S A C R A M E N T
O F
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

JOHN COOKE
NOX PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
AT ST. MARY'S
ON SUNDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 1787.

BY
W I L L I A M
LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

SECOND EDITION,

OXFORD:
PRINTED FOR J. FLETCHER IN THE TURL;
AND SOLD BY MR. POOLE AND MR. BROSTER IN CHESTER.

MDCCXC.

See preceding page

S E R M O N
ON THE
SACRAMENT
IMPRIMATUR,

JOHAN. COOKE,

Vice-Can. Oxon.

C.C.C.
Feb. 9. 1789.



ON SUNDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 1787.

W I L L I A M
LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER

SECOND EDITION.

O X F O R D :
PRINTED FOR J. FLETCHER IN THE STREET
AND SOLD BY MR. POOLE AND MR. BROOKER IN CHESTER.

MDCCLXXXIX

[iv]

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF CHESTER.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

I PERSUADE myself, that you will receive with attention every attempt to fix the true notion of a rite, considered by our Church, as generally necessary to Salvation; this I have endeavoured to do in the former of these discourses. In the latter, I shall be glad, if I have established the just interpretation of a discourse of our Lord's in the sixth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, which

which appears to me to inforce, as its primary object, the necessity of that rite, as well as to point out the great benefits of it.

I am,

my Reverend Brethren,

your very faithful and

affectionate Brother,

W. CHESTER.

the great object with our reformers was
to show they acknowledged the doctrine of the
Real Presence, to show that of Transubstantiation

They took much pains likewise to show from
the Scriptures, as well as from the authority of
the early Fathers, that this was not a
new doctrine, but one which had been held from
the beginning of the Christian Church.

I CORINTHIANS X. 16.

For the Church, have still supported; but

of the Lord's Supper, which

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it
not the communion of the blood of
Christ? The bread which we break,
is it not the communion of the body
of Christ?*

of the Lord's Supper, which

THERE are Three several notions
respecting the Lord's supper, which
have long since divided the sentiments of the
Christian world; all of them agreeing in this
point, that they attribute to it, what our
Church considers as essential to a Sacrament,
an outward visible sign and an inward spiri-
tual grace.

A The

The great object with our Reformers was, whilst they acknowledged the doctrine of the Real Presence, to refute that of Transubstantiation; as it afterwards was to refute the notion of Impanation or Consubstantiation.

They took much pains likewise to shew from the Scriptures, as well as from the authority of the earlier Fathers, that this rite was not a *material* Sacrifice; an idea which later Writers notwithstanding, of great weight and character in our Church, have still supported; particularly from the Pure Offering of Malachi, and the parallel drawn by St. Paul between the Lord's table and the table of Devils.

But in opposition to this idea, and indeed to the very notion of a Sacrament, it hath been strenuously urged, that from the words of institution, "do this in remembrance of me, " &c." nothing more can be collected than the design of a *bare memorial*. Yet the notion, which hath best approved itself to the learned and dispassionate, is that of a *feast upon a Sacrifice*; a feast upon the symbols of that body and blood of Christ, which made the one great Sacrifice for the sins of mankind. To this I know of but one considerable objection; which is sometimes made by those who are well-wishers to the true idea of a Sacrament; and who have thought, that it is too remote
from

from common apprehension, too learned for general use; and therefore probably not the primary and most accurate explanation of the matter. Still this interpretation seems to have obtained the most general suffrage amongst the Divines of our own Church, till the notion of a bare memorial was revived by an eminent Prelate, whose ostensible design at least was, by removing from this ceremony every thing essential to a Sacrament, to render it no longer exceptionable to the bulk of those Protestants amongst us who dissent from the Church of England. Amongst the answers to this "plain account of the Sacrament," as it is called, was one from the pen of another Prelate, who defended the idea of a feast upon a Sacrifice with uncommon ability and force of argument. But whilst his larger works engaged the admiration of the learned world, this smaller publication was received with less attention, than either the importance of the subject, or the solidity of his reasoning deserved. Hence perhaps in part it may have happened, that later writers have again revived the idea of a bare memorial; which it was the object of this Prelate, in a work entitled "a Rational account of the nature and end of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper," to refute.

Be this as it may, the opinion of a bare memorial seems to gain upon the minds of the public; whether from the plausible and boasted simplicity only, which this and other Socinian tenets hold out, or from the inactive indolence of those who too easily acquiesce under the incroachments, which these doctrines make upon the true faith, I do not inquire. But as I have persuaded myself that this latter idea of the rite under consideration is inconsistent with the true design of it, deprives it of its essential signification, defrauds the communicant of much real comfort to which he is entitled, and therefore takes from him much of its real benefit; I shall use my endeavours to confute such an idea, by producing some arguments hitherto, so far as I know, not urged in favour of the feast upon a Sacrifice, and by shewing at the same time that the main objection to the notion, for the establishment of which I contend, is ill founded. For if, with the use and application of no more learning than what every man of good understanding brings with him to the reading of the English Bible, I can shew that the notion of a feast upon a Sacrifice is sufficiently intelligible; the objection that it is too remote from common apprehension will be easily removed. If moreover I can shew that without
this

this notion the words instituting the rite, few and easy as they may appear, are far from conveying a clear and connected purport, I shall then call it not only a plain and obvious, but a just and necessary interpretation.

The account given by St. Matthew is this :
 “ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread,
 “ and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the
 “ disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my
 “ body. And he took the cup, and gave it to
 “ them, saying, drink ye all of it, for this is
 “ my blood of the new Testament, which is
 “ shed for many for the remission of sins.”
 The account by St. Mark agrees in effect accurately with this, omitting only the last clause
 “ for the remission of sins.” Here, if I mistake not, we have a striking instance, how far the familiarity of sounds, by dint of habitual repetition, will impose upon the mind under the appearance of a real and just apprehension of the propositions recited. It is not at first view very easy to conceive any difficulty in the connection of these propositions, “ Take,
 “ eat, this is my body ;” “ drink ye all of
 “ this, for this is my blood :” yet surely no institution was ever more remote from common apprehension, if we are allowed to look no further than the letter, as some eagerly contend : no precept was ever more unex-

amplified in the history of Jewish rites, or more unprecedented in all the variety of caprice, which distinguished the ceremonies of Idolatrous worship. Whether we consider our Lord as a Teacher, or Legislator, a Friend, or Benefactor, still the command to *eat* the symbol of his body, and to *drink* the symbol of his blood, unconnected as it must stand in the ideas of those, who will admit no explication, but what may be found in the strict phrase of the *institution*, will be allowed to be as strange as it is new.

But St. Luke recites the words of institution with some variation, and in a manner which may possibly throw light upon the subject. His words are, “ this is my body, *which is* “ *given for you; this do in remembrance of me.*” And in the account given by St. Paul the words are “ my body, which is *broken* for you :” And *after the cup*, “ this do ye, as oft as ye “ drink it, *in remembrance of me.*”

Here then the reason of the institution is, it is true, assigned : they were to eat the symbol of the body, and drink that of the blood, of one who was to give his body and blood for the remission of their sins; and this they were to do as a perpetual memorial of one, who thus laid down his life for them.

But still the difficulty remains respecting the peculiar mode of the institution: the ques-
tion

tion is still, why *eat* the body, why *drink* the blood of one who had died for you? Why so strange a memorial, so singular an expression of respect and gratitude? How comes it, that our Lord, who always adapted his instructions so much to the occasion, and so remarkably availed himself of every allusion, which might through the senses inforce a stronger impression upon the mind, should propose a mode of remembrance, which in the naked recital, as it now meets the ear, stands independent of every preconception on the part of his disciples?

Or again, how happened it, that he, who in his other institution, that of Baptism, adopted a customary practice of his nation, should in this instance injoin a rite which was likely particularly to disgust the feelings of a Jew?

St. Paul indeed speaks as if he were explaining the reason for this peculiar mode of memorial, when he adds, "for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, *ye do shew the Lord's death* till he come." Yet if the passages already cited from the three Evangelists, together with the account given by St. Paul, be all the Scriptures, which we are allowed to consult upon this subject, the advocates for the simplicity of the Socinian scheme will do well to tell us how and in what manner the *eating* and *drinking* of these symbols

of his body and blood do really shew the Lord's death.

Our Lord died upon the cross: his flesh in the literal sense was in no way *broken*, but by the spear of the soldier. It was particularly predicted, and fulfilled in his death, that not a bone of him should be broken. On the other hand his blood issued upon the ground. In what view therefore *drinking* the wine could represent such a death, is a point not easily ascertained.

The truth is, that, until these difficulties meet a satisfactory solution, it is in vain to talk of the plainness and simplicity of this institution. For if by plainness be meant any obvious connection between the event of Christ's death, and the command apparently founded upon it, we have shewn, that, whilst the institution is considered as a memorial only, nothing can well be farther from being plain. And if by simplicity be meant the facility, with which it is performed, neither is it so simple, as it might obviously have been made for the purpose only of a memorial of Christ's death. As it is most clear that either of the two parts, that of eating the body, or that of drinking the blood, separately taken, would have fulfilled this purpose quite as significantly as they both now do,

I do

I do not mean to deny, that the institution is plain and simple ; indeed I hope to shew that it is so : but it must be from a very different view of the subject. That it had an obvious plainness and simplicity, when first enjoined and administered to the disciples, may be collected from the little or no pains taken to explain its fitness and propriety. In fact it is proposed with as little preparation as the other great rite of our religion, " Go baptize " all nations, &c." from whence it is evident that the words of institution then carried their own explication. But it by no means follows, that they now do this. On the contrary, I trust these observations alone are sufficient to prove that they do not. Let the advocates for simplicity therefore say what they please, we must have recourse to other passages of Scripture, or to customs elsewhere recited, or to the occasional circumstances of the moment, or in short to the known apprehensions of the persons to whom this rite was delivered. It has been already observed, that there are, in St. Luke's account of the institution, two expressions which may lead to an explanation. " My body, which is *given for you,*" or, as St. Paul expresses it, "*broken for you,*" And, " this cup is *the New Testament in my blood*" "*which is shed for you.*"

We

We learn therefore, that the reason of the injunction to eat this body is some way founded upon its being given or broken for us. And again, that the reason of the command to drink the cup is some way founded upon its being the blood of Christ, and the cup of the New Testament in his blood, which is *shed* for us. The plain command therefore is, this body is *given*, or *broken*, *for you; therefore eat* it in remembrance of me. This blood is *shed for you, and is the New Testament, or Covenant, therefore drink it*. But as no one of the passages, which recite the institution, explain at all the connection in either case between the matter of fact and the duty founded upon it, we must either extend our inquiries beyond these *four* passages, to which the author of "the plain account, &c." would have us confined; or leave one of the two great rites of our religion unexamined and unexplained.

We will therefore now inquire, what were those ideas and conceptions, and what the notions, with which this institution had so evident a connection, as to render it in the apprehension of the disciples easy and simple. In fact what key they had, which opened to them the connection between the parts of this proposition, "Take, eat, this is my body, which
"is given or broken, for you;" and again of
this,

this, "This is my blood of the new Covenant, shed for you for the remission of sins; drink ye all of this."

Now to *give* a body to *divide* or *break* it, and to *shed its blood*, was the very form of Sacrifice instituted by the Mosaic law. To a Jew therefore, one living under the law of Moses, a body *slain, given, and broken for another*, must unavoidably recall the idea of some, or more of the Sacrifices of that law: and the institution would of course receive its explanation with the disciples from the notion of a *Sacrifice*.

But if the words "this is my body which is given for you, this is my blood which is shed for you" reminded them of a Sacrifice, the words which follow "for the remission of sins" could not but remind them specifically of the *Sin-Offering*. The command, "take, eat," would in addition suggest to them the idea of *another* species of Sacrifice; and teach them, that they were likewise to commemorate a *Peace-Offering*. Again, when our Lord, pointing to the cup, said, "this is my blood of the New Covenant," they could not but recollect the words which Moses had used, when he ratified the *Old Covenant* by the sprinkling of the blood of the Sacrifice, "Behold the blood of the Covenant."

And

And when they were commanded all of them to *drink* that blood, they would readily understand by the use of wine, appropriated to the commemoration of that Sacrifice of Christ's blood, which was once to sprinkle all mankind, how every one might apply the ratification of the New Covenant to himself. It might too remind them of the peculiar Sacrifice made at the consecration of the priests; and of that singular appointment, "that they should all *eat* those things, wherewith the *atonement* was made." Lastly, if the occasion upon which this rite was instituted, if the passover, which our Lord desired with so great a desire to eat with his disciples, if the elements of bread and wine used therein, together with the words, referring to a practice already established, "do this, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me," have induced all parties, ancient and modern, to consider it as substituted in the room of the Paschal supper; it is plainly impossible, that it should not have led the disciples to compare with their deliverance from Egypt their greater deliverance in the remission of sins, and to consider this new rite as a *sacrificial remembrance* of that death, of which the Paschal lamb had been hitherto the accustomed type or prefigurative representation.

Having

Having thus pointed to some of the principal Sacrifices in detail, which seem immediately connected with this institution, and make, if I may so speak, its ground-work; I will now beg your attention to the general and concurrent purport of the terms recited in the several accounts given of this institution. Even the previous expression, "when he had given thanks," or blessed the elements, accords exactly with the ceremony of the *Peace-Offering*. Thus of Samuel it is said, "for the people will not eat till he come, because he doth *bless* the Sacrifice, and *afterwards* they do eat that be bidden."

I observe too, that in the words, "this is my body," our Lord uses the very term by which this Sacrifice of himself was predicted: "A *body* hast thou prepared." Again, "Given for you." Given to God for a Sacrifice according to the Mosaic law, which enjoins, that the animal to be sacrificed should be *given* to the priest, as God's representative. But that I may not repeat what has been already urged upon many of these words, I will simply call to your recollection their general relation to a Sacrifice, by a bare recital of the institution as it is given by St. Matthew, which is as follows:

" And,

“ And, as they were eating, Jesus took bread,
 “ and *blessed* it, and *brake* it, and gave it to
 “ the disciples, and said, Take, *eat*, this is
 “ my *body*. And he took the cup, and gave it
 “ to them, saying, *drink* ye all of it, for this
 “ is my *blood of the New Testament*, which is
 “ *shed* for many, for the *remission of sins*.

Here, I think, I might safely rest my general argument, that, easy as the connection between the parts of this proposition, “ Take, eat, this is my body ;” and again of this, “ drink ye all of this, for this is my blood,” may appear, when unexamined; and few as the words of institution are, the real connection in the parts of the two propositions can be explained satisfactorily upon no other supposition, than that of their allusion to a *Sacrifice*; without which a great share of the few words in each of the passages reciting the institution will be superfluous and unintelligible, and all of them ill explained. I may therefore, I hope, without being unduely sanguine assert, that the idea of a *Sacrifice* is the primary and leading idea of this institution; and that, as I have used no argument but what lies open to every reader of the English Bible, I may be allowed to call it an obvious and easy explanation.

There

There is indeed an objection to this conclusion, which I bring forward with the more pleasure, because, when examined, I trust it will be considered as leading to a confirmation of it. Namely that, after all the pains taken by different writers to make this institution agree with the respective hypothesis of each, it does not nor can be made exactly to correspond with any one species of Sacrifice under the Mosaic law. I readily admit the fact; and am inclined to think withal, that had it exactly corresponded with any one mode of Sacrifice, and confined its correspondence to that only, it had been less perfect in its design than it now is.

The truth is, if it be a representation or application of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, it must correspond not exactly with one, but essentially with all the Sacrifices of the law. For as all the Sacrifices were types of this great event, and as the event itself must correspond to its own types, so must whatever institution be made to represent that event. The rite therefore which should fully "shew the Lord's death," must shew the Sacrifice made by that death, which doubtless was St. Paul's meaning; a Sacrifice, upon which alone the merits and efficacy of that death are founded. For it is in the blood of
Christ

Christ *sacrificially shed* that the Scriptures found the notion of propitiation, of atonement, and of forgiveness.

This representative rite therefore should shew, that our Lord's body was, besides its other correspondences, a Sin-Offering, a Peace-Offering, and the true Paschal Lamb. Because in this view of the matter the rite will not so much be a full representation of any one, as an abridgment or recapitulation of every Sacrifice of the Old law. And I think the words of institution do in themselves, when duely illustrated, indicate this general correspondence.

To the disciples then there would appear a wonderful aptitude in the choice and use of an institution, which should accommodate itself to such various allusions of their law, whilst it reminded them, in what manner the death of Christ fulfilled whatever the several ceremonies of that law prefigured. And hence it has happened, that both Ancients and Moderns have considered it under so many distinct points of view; or at least have expressed it by so many distinct appellations: as the Christian *Sacrifice*, the Christian *Passover*, the Christian *Oblation*, the *Eucharist*, &c.

To the Gentile converts, whose Sacrifices likewise were partly expiatory and partly eucharistical,

charistical, this institution would appear perfectly obvious and simple; and they would of course consider it, not as a memorial barely, but as a token of God's favour and reconciliation.

To the Christian, I mean the unlearned Christian, of the present day it is sufficient perhaps, if he understand, that the death of Christ was a Sacrifice for the sins of the world: and they must have something more than simplicity in view, who teach not this article explicitly to the lowest understanding.

But to return; this point once well understood, I see nothing plainer, no interpretation of this Sacrament more easy and simple, none more rational, than that it is a representation and memorial of that Sacrifice, or, in the language of our Church, "a continual remembrance of the *Sacrifice* of the "death of Christ," as well as the means by which every man may apply to himself the new Covenant of grace purchased by that Sacrifice.

It will be observed, that I have purposely avoided all mention of the opinion of the Ancients upon this subject; my reason has been, because how much soever they may confirm this account, I have been anxious that it should stand upon more obvious and more

B

certain

certain ground, upon the fair and just interpretation of the words of institution : from which, when explained and illustrated by those passages in the Old law to which they evidently refer, I shall be permitted to conclude, that this rite is in its most obvious signification sacrificial, and is explicable in fair construction only by reference to the manner and design of the Jewish Sacrifices.

I have not contended that the institution is a *material* and *proper* Sacrifice ; because the command is not, as in the vision shewn to St. Peter, “ slay and eat,” but eat, “ this is “ my body, which *is* broken for you ;” drink, “ this is my blood, which *is* shed for you.” Thus St. Paul ; “ Christ our Passover *is* slain, “ therefore let us keep the feast.” And again, when he compares the table of the Lord, not the altar, with the table of Devils, it is evident, that he considers it as a *feast upon a Sacrifice* ; unless we could suppose the Apostle to draw his argument from a case not parallel. There is too a remarkable passage in Ezekiel ; the words of which, as well as the subject, are peculiarly apposite to this point : where the fowls are invited “ to eat the flesh, “ and drink the blood, of the Sacrifice :” to which it is added, “ Thus ye shall be filled “ at my table, &c.

But

But upon the supposition, that this rite be the representation of a Sacrifice, it will furnish us with more than one additional argument to prove, that it really conveys an inward and spiritual grace. As thus for instance: if it convey to us the benefits of a *Sin-Offering*, namely atonement and forgiveness, expressed in the words, "this is my body, which is given for you, for the remission of sins;" by taking off the only obstacle to divine favour, it restores us to a capacity of receiving every communication of divine grace, requisite to our future salvation. Those therefore who know how necessary to salvation the gifts of the Holy Spirit are, will readily allow, that *Sanctification* also is conveyed in this rite. Or it may be stated thus: if besides the benefit of a *Sin-Offering*, it comprize the benefits of a *Peace-Offering*, expressed in the words, "take, eat, this is my body," then we have a positive proof, in virtue of the rite itself, that it puts us into a state of acceptance with God; a state which certainly supposes the communication of divine grace, because without that grace it is impossible that we should continue in a state of acceptance. Lastly if, in addition to the benefits of a *Sin-Offering* and a *Peace-Offering*, it be likewise a *fede-*

ral rite, and we drink the blood of the new Covenant ; we evidently apply to ourselves all the benefits of that Covenant : a primary one of which is, as we are repeatedly taught, Sanctification. If it could be still doubted, whether such grace be *immediately* or *presently* conveyed ; we might answer, that the benefits of all Sacrifices under the Law were *immediate* and *present* : as I suppose the benefits of all acts of devotion in some sort to be. Take for instance the *Sin-Offering* : it is said in Leviticus generally of the offender, “ He shall “ bring his offering to the priest, who shall “ make atonement with it for him, and it “ shall be forgiven him.” Accordingly in fact we find him allowed immediately to bring his Peace-Offering, and then restored to the congregation. We may therefore safely conclude, that a rite, which seems to comprehend *all* the virtues of *all the Sacrifices* under the Old law, comprizes that likewise of *present* and *immediate* efficacy in conveying to us an inward and spiritual grace.

A
S E R M O N
O N
A DISCOURSE OF OUR LORD'S
I N T H E
S I X T H C H A P T E R
O F
S T. J O H N ' s G O S P E L.
P R E A C H E D B E F O R E T H E
U N I V E R S I T Y O F O X F O R D
A T S T. M A R Y ' s
O N S U N D A Y, 25 N O V E M B E R, 1787.
B Y
W I L L I A M
L O R D B I S H O P O F C H E S T E R.

A
S E R M O N
ON
A DISCOURSE OF OUR LORDS
IN THE
SIXTH CHAPTER
OF
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
AT ST. MARYS
ON SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER 1785
BY
W I L L I A M
LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER

ST. JOHN VI. 56.

*He that eateth my flesh and drinketh
my blood dwelleth in me, and I in
him.*

THE fate of the discourse contained in this chapter has been extraordinary. Delivered indeed as it was by our Lord with a direct purpose to check the interested and intemperate zeal of many who called themselves his disciples, we are not to wonder if they were disgusted with a language, which, so far as it was intelligible, threatened to destroy the fond hopes, which they had conceived, of temporal splendor in their Messiah ; and in part treated of matters, of which it was not possible that they should then form clear and distinct notions.

Yet after the event of our Lord's death, with which this discourse had so close a connection that it should seem alone to have clear-

ed up every obscurity ; after the completion of that promise, which had assured the Apostles that the Holy Spirit should lead them into all truth, we cannot suppose a discourse, for it is not the interpretation of a word, a phrase, or of one sentence, which is the object of our present inquiry, we cannot suppose a discourse, which certainly turned upon a leading principle in the religion to be established, a principle, which was to direct the practice and exalt the hopes of a Christian, would longer be a matter of difficult interpretation.

If therefore in later ages it has become the subject of dispute, it is probable, that the apparent difficulties, which have been started, may owe their rise, rather to the prejudicated opinions, which men have brought with them to the consideration of this discourse, than to an inherent obscurity in the subject itself, to any want of light from subsequent events, or a defect in the Apostolical instructions.

The point in litigation, first between the Romanists themselves, lest it should be thought to render the Cup a necessary part of the Eucharist, afterwards between the Protestant Churches and that of Rome, and last of all between some Divines of our own Church, has been, whether the passage of
my

my text, and others in this chapter of the same import, be *properly* interpreted of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper; or whether they contain only a general doctrine applicable to that Sacrament; whether they have or have not *immediately* in view the institution afterwards enjoined in the Lord's supper.

Authorities from the earlier ages have been most strenuously canvassed and boldly challenged by all parties. The opinion of the Reformers, as well upon the Continent as in England, seems to have been uniformly against the direct connection of this chapter with the Sacrament. Their sentiment is concisely expressed thus: *Christus ibi loquitur non de manducatione sacramentali, sed spirituali; et de pane significato non significante.* Christ there speaks not of sacramental manducation but spiritual manducation; not of that bread which is the sign, but of that which is signified. I must however except the opinion of Archbishop Cranmer; whose judgment has been partially cited, and improperly thrown without abatement into the same scale. For the fact is, that the opinion of this great man varied upon this as upon other parts of the general subject: as might well be expected from one upon whose mind the light of the Gospel was then beaming with
a recent

a recent and gradual increase of splendor ; and who from repeated and corrected examination only could hope to establish that vast plan of a system in discipline and doctrine, which should meet the wishes and comprize the judgment of all the Protestant Churches.

But in general the arguments urged against the propriety of interpreting these passages, as belonging directly to the Sacrament, at one time by him, and afterwards by others, seem all to have been originally suggested from the fear of giving advantage to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Yet how little ground there is for such a suspicion will, I think, be evident to any one, who even cursorily shall read the whole of this discourse. For however the Papist may build upon the letter of these words, " My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," or any other similar passage there to be found, there is not a chapter in the volume of Scripture, which supplies a position so directly in contradiction to their gross interpretation, as that intended to correct the unthinking and hasty apprehension of our Lord's disciples at Capernaum. " It is the *spirit* that quickeneth, the *flesh* profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The

The Prelate indeed, upon whose *plain account of the Sacrament* we have already animadverted, has carried his opinion upon this chapter with so high an hand, that whilst he has been sparing of his own arguments, he has not condescended even to state those of others, who think with him : a defect supplied by a confidence of assertion, in point of sentiment, and in point of fact, which, upon religious subjects, is not very common in writers of any description, and a familiar disposition to suppose what our Lord would, or should, have said in given circumstances, which is both presumptuous and indecent.

It is true, however, that contemporary writers, men distinguished by piety, by learning, by the most patient and persevering examination of Scripture truths, have supported the same conclusion : to whose arguments I shall, so far as I know, do justice, if I answer the following objections.

The first of these supposes that our Lord could not speak of corporal or sacramental eating of his flesh, because the Sacrament was not yet ordained.

Secondly, it is urged, that in this chapter there is no mention made of the signs used in this Sacrament, but only of the thing signified.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, that all, who believed in Christ, did eat his flesh, and drink his blood, or else they could not have dwelled in Christ nor Christ in them.

Fourthly, that our Lord says in the present time the bread that I will give is my flesh.

The fifth difficulty, thrown in the way of this interpretation, is that the words, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," must contain a condition, which would comprehend all the faithful before Christ, and such as shall be prevented from the Sacrament after him, and that therefore they are inapplicable to this Sacrament.

Lastly, that all who eat his body and drink his blood in the signs, have not Christ dwelling in them; and that therefore he did not speak of the Sacrament, when he said, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

With regard to the first objection, drawn from the non-institution of this Sacrament at the time when this discourse was delivered, I will only oppose to it one plain fact, which is this; that the same Evangelist St. John has, in the third chapter of his Gospel,
preserved

preserved a discourse of our Lord's with Nicodemus, which expressly mentions the sign and the thing signified, the necessity and the good effects of Baptism, long before that Sacrament was instituted.

There can therefore be no presumption drawn against the application of this chapter to the institution of the Lord's supper, from the time when this doctrine was delivered, which would not equally militate against the application of the third chapter to the Sacrament of Baptism: an application, which is, notwithstanding, universally allowed. It should likewise be remembered by those, who urge this objection, that the institution of Baptism, however early in the course of our Lord's ministry it was described and explained, was not enjoined till *after* this of the Lord's supper.

So much for the objection by itself considered: but I would make a further use of this discourse upon Baptism: between which and that under consideration there is more than an accidental resemblance.

Our Saviour had told Nicodemus, that he must be born again. Nicodemus replies to the impossibility of the thing in the obvious and literal sense of the words. Jesus in answer, with peculiar solemnity and claim to
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attention points out the possibility, and the means of being born again ; as well as the necessity of such regeneration. “ Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” To which, still remarking upon the want of apprehension in Nicodemus, he adds, “ if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”

In the sixth chapter, Jesus had said, “ the bread, that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” The Jews, again answering as Nicodemus had before done to the impossibility of the thing in its literal sense, said, “ how can this man give us his flesh to eat?” To which our Lord returns an answer, corresponding with that given to Nicodemus even to the very turn of the sentence, “ Verily verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you ;” the purport of which words is repeated and confirmed in the three next verses, to which he adds, still remarking upon their want of apprehension, “ doth this offend you? what and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” a reply so exactly parallel to that,

that, with which he had concluded his conversation with this Master in Israel; that the bare juxta-position of these sentences will render each the comment upon the other. From which analogy I cannot but think, that whoever will observe the stile, manner, and connection of these two discourses, will be of opinion, that St. John took pains industriously to shew, that the two institutions, which were to distinguish this religion, made part of our Saviour's plan, long before they were actually enjoined. What confirms this notion is, that the only miracle, which St. John relates after the other Evangelists, is this of the miraculous increase of bread: a circumstance in itself highly remarkable, as the reason of it is obvious, because it gave an easy opportunity of introducing and explaining the nature of this Sacrament, as the occurrence relating to Nicodemus had afforded an opportunity of explaining the other. To which I must add, that he is the only Evangelist, who insists upon the sacramental importance of either institution, and that his attention in this instance is perfectly consonant with the general design of his history; which was written in aid of the other Evangelists, to supply such doctrines, as he judged might be most usefully added, and at the

the same time to correct the misrepresentations of some already received.

If we now look back upon the train of our Lord's argument, we shall with better advantage meet the second objection; that there is no mention made of the sign in this Sacrament, but only of the thing signified.

The people, by their impatience to croud upon our Lord after the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, had drawn from him an admonition in his usual manner; which was indeed always to avail himself of the occasion, and to colour his discourses from the complexion of the moment. "Labour not," says he, for the meat which perisheth, but "for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; which the Son of man shall give unto you." They, still urging that the miracle of the loaves was inferior to that shewn by Moses in the instance of his giving Manna to their fathers, quoted the passage from the Psalmist; "He gave them bread from heaven:" to which our Lord replied, "Your fathers did eat Manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." So

So far then all, to the fifty-first verse inclusively, is plain and clear: and the metaphor used by our Lord, easily and obviously conveys a sense of the beneficial effects of his death, and the superior advantages which the world were to derive from that living bread, that flesh which he should give for the life of mankind, that Sacrifice which he should offer upon the cross for the sins of the world.

But upon the question, "how can this man give us his flesh to eat," our Lord uses a language which bears no relation to any thing in the preceding discourse, no connection with the subject immediately in question, or to that which gave occasion to it, to the bread miraculously increased, to the Manna of Moses, or the true bread of life, and which nothing prior to the institution of the Lord's supper could explain. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Had the Jews even clearly understood that he spake of his death, which the very disciples long after did not; had they been apprized of the necessity of such a measure, and of the benefits to be derived from it to mankind, still the proposition of *eating* his flesh, and *drinking* his blood, as a compliance
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requisite

requisite to the preservation and security of life, either natural or spiritual, must have been as unintelligible to their reason, as it was abhorrent from their imagination. For it seems impossible, that they could form any conjecture upon the mode in which alone this was practicable, till it should receive its explication in the institution of the Lord's supper.

It is in vain here to say, that there is any analogy betwixt believing the doctrines and practising the precepts of your Teacher, and *eating* his flesh and *drinking* his blood.

The Jewish Doctors are quoted to prove that the figure of eating and drinking was customary among the Jews for receiving and imbibing doctrine: a remark, which from its great probability might readily be admitted, without any positive authority: for, the operations of the mind being no objects of sense, we are obliged when we treat of them to use metaphorical terms; and those taken from the operations of the body are the nearest and most natural. Thus to ruminate upon and digest the instructions of another, is as easy and obvious a language as the subject admits; and hence the injunction to one Prophet "to *eat* the roll," that he might accurately remember the contents of it, and deliver

deliver them to the house of Israel, as well as the declaration of another, "thy words were found and I did *eat* them," are obviously intelligible. But still the precept to *eat* the body and *drink* the blood of your Teacher *as such* bears no conceivable analogy to any benefit to be received from thence, and is in truth a saying not only hard in point of doctrine, but in point of interpretation also.

If more arguments can be thought necessary I will add one, which with me has much weight though a consideration purely negative: and it is this, that, supposing the language of eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Christ to mean the receiving, the believing, or the practising of the precepts and doctrines of Christ, we might reasonably expect the Apostles in their epistolary writings to have repeated these metaphors; at least to have referred to them, or to have enlarged upon them: particularly the Apostles St. John and St. Paul: St. Paul, who had occasion to treat so much and so frequently upon the nature, the efficacy, and the privileges of faith; St. John, who upon this supposition will have left these metaphors so little explained in that distinguished conversation of his Master.

As much in vain is it to say, that to eat the flesh and drink the blood of a Benefactor

has for its object only a more solemn and awful remembrance of him. Until the patrons of the one, or the other hypothesis can produce some matter, or some allusion in sacred, or at least profane writ, which will better warrant their suppositions, the assertions will find as little credit as they have foundation.

Again upon the question being put by the Jews, how and by what means they were to eat his flesh, he in the fifty-fifth verse asserts positively, that not only his flesh was meat indeed, but *his blood drink* indeed.

Now in this place also it is evident to me, that he is speaking of the signs, as well as the things signified; or rather that he calls the signs, as in the institution itself of this Sacrament, by the names of the things signified. I say calls the signs by the names of the things signified; a figure used in all languages, and particularly in the stile of Scripture: because I am confident, there is no fact, no custom, no rite, no doctrine, and no expression in Scripture, prior to the institution itself, which will give any explication of this our Saviour's assertion, "My flesh is meat
"indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."
And lest the institution itself should fail sufficiently to draw off their minds from the
gross

gross and literal sense of the words, our Lord refers them for the final explication of them to his Ascension. "What and if ye shall see "the Son of man ascend up where he was "before?" then at least you will understand, that "my words are spirit and they are life." Spirit, because you cannot then interpret the eating and drinking of my flesh and blood carnally; but of the signs only. Life, because these signs shall be efficacious in deriving upon you all the benefits of my body broken and blood shed.

It will be supposed, that I am well aware of a *feast upon a Sacrifice*, to which the words "my flesh is meat indeed" will bear an allusion: but even the notion of a Sacrifice, simply considered, will supply no analogy, which shall explain the idea conveyed in the words, "my blood is drink indeed," till it can be proved, that to *drink* the blood of the Sacrifice made a part of the religious ceremonies in the Jewish ritual. For though we have some obscure hints of the blood of Sacrifices drunk in the necromantic rites of the Pagans, the Jewish law particularly forbids the use of blood. The injunction therefore to drink his blood would with a Jew have its peculiar difficulties. Nay the prohibition of blood in the Mosaic law, either generally

in the way of sustenance, or as a part of their Sacrificial feasts, is founded upon its being the *means of atonement*; whereas, in the institution of the Sacrament, the use of it under its symbol is enjoined for this very reason, that they might drink that, wherewith the atonement was made: “drink ye all of this;” “for this is my blood, *shed for many, for the remission of sins.*” From whence, if from no other argument, it might be plain, that our Lord in the words, “my blood is drink indeed,” “except ye drink my blood, &c.” looks forward to an institution, in which his body and blood were to be exhibited separately, and anticipates the language and the doctrine and the signs afterwards used in this Sacrament.

I do not here forget that Divines of the first rank speak of a spiritual manducation, as a doctrine established in this chapter independently of the signs in the Sacrament of the Lord's supper.

Thus the third objection alledges, that the Sacrament was not yet ordained; and yet all that believed at that time in Christ did eat his flesh and drink his blood, or else they would not have dwelled in Christ nor Christ in them. Again it is said, if Christ had never ordained the Sacrament, yet should we have eaten his flesh, and drunken his blood,
and

and have had thereby everlasting life; as all the faithful did before the Sacrament was ordained, and do daily when they receive not the Sacrament.

With all due respect to the authority of the Person here speaking, I must observe the assertion is not accurate. The prior existence of the doctrine in question, which should rather have been proved, is here taken for granted. It is true, no doubt, that the faithful would have received all the benefits of Christ's death, if the Sacrament had not been ordained: but if the expression, "except ye eat the flesh," allude to the feast upon the great Sacrifice, which he was about to make, yet the words, "and *drink my blood*," can have relation only to this institution; without which it is more than probable, the faithful would never have been said to eat his flesh, nor was the condition itself, "except ye drink my blood," or the means of performing it intelligible, till they had learned in this Sacrament, that the wine was to be taken as his blood. In a literal sense the words have no meaning, or one attended with so many impossibilities, that we must leave it to the Papists. For, as our Lord himself says, "the flesh profiteth nothing," could not upon any supposition be useful, without re-

lation to a feast upon a Sacrifice, could not by any reasonable figure be considered as our food : and we have already seen, that Christ's blood could convey no analogous meaning to the apprehension of a Jew in particular, as there was nothing in the Law, or in the subsequent Prophets, to which it could refer.

Yet when our Lord called the wine by the name of his blood which was then to be shed for many for the remission of sins ; and again, in allusion to the blood which ratified the Mosaic Covenant, calls it the blood of the new Covenant, and ordered it to be drunk in lieu of the cup at the Paschal supper, and lastly made it part of the feast, which should commemorate in symbols the Sacrifice of his death, he did, no doubt, render this part also of the institution highly significant of the benefits, which he intended thereby to communicate to us.

To eat therefore the flesh, and to drink the blood of Christ, is to eat and drink the signs so called, in order to avail ourselves of the benefits of his body broken and blood shed. If we feast upon the symbols of the great Sacrifice made for the sins of the world, we apply this Sacrifice and its benefits to ourselves ; we partake of the pledges of God's favour ; we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ
and

and drink his blood. In any other sense, I conceive, the notion of spiritual manducation, however strenuously insisted upon by persons of eminent authority, to be preposterous: a language borrowed, and a doctrine established, merely from allusions to a subsequent event.

The fourth objection to our interpretation of this chapter is, that Christ says in the present time, and not in the future, the bread, that I will give, is my flesh; an objection which would appear frivolous possibly, if it were not suggested and repeated by respectable writers; and to which it will be thought a sufficient answer, that the institution itself of this Sacrament, the use and design of which was altogether future, is delivered in the same tense. "This is my body," "this is my blood," instead of this shall be my body, this shall be my blood, or, let this be my body, let this be my blood.

With regard to the fifth objection, drawn from the positive exclusion conveyed in the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" namely, that these words must contain a condition, which would comprehend all the faithful before Christ, and such as shall be prevented from the Sacrament after

after him; it proceeds upon an interpretation more strict than is necessary or fair. It is sufficient to justify the universality of this proposition, that the condition be necessary to those, who are in a situation to comply with it; the universality in the enunciation of all law, human and divine, proceeds upon this principle. And if the earlier ages of Christianity, through too scrupulous and adherence to the letter of this condition, thought it requisite to administer the elements of bread and wine to infants, we are no more bound to follow their construction of this passage, than we are to adopt the practice which they founded upon it.

Our Saviour, when he said, "except ye eat," cannot be supposed to have retrospect to *the faithful before Christ*: the proposition has evidently a future signification, and as to the faithful who die daily without this condition, if they want the means, or the opportunity, they are clearly beyond the reach of the injunction. But to put the matter beyond all dispute, we will try it by a parallel case. We do not say that those who died before the institution of Baptism, or that those who are necessarily prevented from it since, shall lose their inheritance in heaven. Our Church has wisely declared both the Sacraments to be
only

only generally necessary to salvation. Yet our Lord, speaking of Baptism exactly in the same form of words, in the discourse which we have already considered, says, "Except
 " a man be born of water and of the spirit, he
 " cannot enter into the kingdom of God :"
 a parallelism in language, which, I must beg, may be again and again taken into the account.

The last objection was, that all who eat his body, and drink his blood, in the signs, have not Christ dwelling in them; and therefore he did not speak of the Sacrament.

It will probably have been observed, that some of these objections take their rise from an exclusive consideration of this discourse, and an inattention to the general analogy of scriptural construction. To illustrate this remark, I will produce out of many only two passages of Scripture, which no plain and honest understanding, at least of the present day, can be supposed to misapprehend : and which, notwithstanding, a similar mode of interpretation would set in direct opposition to the general truth of the Gospel.

St. John says that " God so loved the world;
 " that he gave his only begotten Son, to the
 " end that all, that believe in him, should not
 " perish, but have everlasting life." And St.
 Paul

Paul says, that "Christ came into the world
 "to save sinners." Yet it is no more true that
 all, who believe in Christ, shall have everlasting
 life, or that Christ's coming into the world
 shall save all sinners, than it is that all who
 eat his body, and drink his blood in the signs,
 shall have Christ dwelling in them. But as
 it is true, that all who believe in Christ, and
 live accordingly, shall have everlasting life;
 and that Christ's coming shall save all believ-
 ing and penitent sinners: so is it true also,
 that all, who with the requisite dispositions
 eat and drink the signs of the body and blood
 of Christ, shall have Christ dwelling in them;
 and that all *may* therefore have Christ dwell-
 ing in them, which is the thing more pro-
 perly asserted.

Having thus stated the full force of the
 objections made against interpreting this dis-
 course directly of the Sacrament, it will, I
 hope, appear, that they admit of an easy and
 satisfactory solution; and are no just impedi-
 ment to the interpretation for which I con-
 tend: but that, as in the third chapter of
 this Evangelist the general necessity of Bap-
 tism is declared, so in this is that of the Lord's
 supper.

I have before observed, that this interpre-
 tation has not wanted its advocates: I might
 add

add advocates of the most respectable authority ancient and modern. But that I may be as concise as possible upon the article of authority, I will refer you, for extracts fairly taken would become tedious, to Chrysostom, and after him to Theophylact; who in their comments upon this chapter interpret it primarily and decidedly of the Sacrament, without suspicion of a different sentiment in others: and shall quote from the Ancients only the paraphrase or comment of St. Augustine, as it is translated by Cranmer. "It is the spirit
 " that giveth life, but the flesh profiteth no-
 " thing: the words which I have spoken unto
 " you be spirit and life, that which I have
 " spoken understand you spiritually. You shall
 " not eat this body which you see, and
 " drink that blood which they shall shedde,
 " that shall crucifie me. I have commended
 " unto you a *Sacrament*; understand it spiri-
 " tually, and it shall give you life: and al-
 " though it must be visibly ministered, yet it
 " must be invisibly understood."

It is remarkable, that in a sermon written in the old Saxon tongue before the Conquest, and appointed to be preached to the people at Easter, all the passages in question are concisely applied to this Sacrament, as to their primary and proper object. "Because through his suf-
 ferings

“ferings and rising we be delivered and be
 “made clean by going to *this holy housell*,* as
 “*Christ saith in his Gospel* : Verily verily, I say
 “unto you, ye have no life in you except ye
 “eat my flesh and drink my blood : he that
 “eateth my flesh,” and so on.

Amongst the moderns the judicious Hooker
 seems clearly to adopt this interpretation,
 when, speaking professedly of the Lord’s sup-
 per, he says, “In that life therefore, where
 “neither body nor soul can decay, our souls
 “shall as little require *this Sacrament*, as our
 “bodies corporal nourishment : but as long as
 “the days of our warfare last, during the
 “time that we are both subject to diminu-
 “tion, and capable of augmentation in grace,
 “the words of our Lord and Saviour will re-
 “main forcible : Except ye eat the flesh of the
 “Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have
 “no life in you.”

But if we be justified in interpreting the
 words of my text directly of this Sacrament,
 this passage will have an important influence
 in forming our opinions respecting the pecu-
 liar benefits arising from this institution : and
 we have only to inquire into the meaning of
 the expression, “dwelleth in me and I in

* The Pyx, box or vessel, in which the sacred bread was kept.

“him,”

“him,” to determine what these benefits precisely are.

Now St. John in his Epistles frequently adopts this phrase of our Lord’s; where Christ is said to dwell in us by his grace and spirit; as by the efficacy of the same grace and spirit in the regulation of our moral conduct we are said to dwell in Christ, that is to live in the practice of his precepts.

To dwell in Christ therefore is to live according to his commandments; *to have Christ dwelling in us* is to enjoy the assistance and influence of his Holy Spirit. Thus St. John, “Hereby we know that *he abideth* * *in us* by “the Spirit which he hath given us.” Again, “Hereby know we that *we dwell* † *in him*, “and he in us, because he hath given us of “his Spirit.”

If then we rightly interpret the text, the assistances of the Spirit are directly annexed to the Sacrament of the Lord’s supper. But the sanctification of the Spirit supposes redemption or pardon, which therefore might also from this chapter be proved a benefit consequent upon this ordinance. But as these proofs may be more obviously and simply deduced from the words of institution, and from the nature of the rite itself, I shall not insist at large upon the argument, but content my-

* μένει.

† μένομεν. 1 Ep. iv. 12, 13.

not rather what is signified by the words
former discourse in opposition to those, who
have interpreted the eating and drinking
Christ's body and blood to be no more, than
keeping his commandments, that it pointed
to something more analogous to the Eucharist
state of the words: in opposition to those
who interpret it only of the thing signified in
the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, that it
includes the figure also, without which the
notion of spiritual manducation is unfounded,
and the passage both to Jew and Christian
inexplicable: in opposition to those, who
consider the Lord's supper simply as a remem-
brance of his death, that it is a commemora-
tion of the Sacrifice for sin made by his death,
and a symbolical feast upon that Sacrifice; and
is therefore a pledge and means of communi-
cating to us *all* the benefits of that Sacrifice.

THE END.

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